The Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building

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The Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building

Introduction

The Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building is a most polished statement on the renewed self-confidence of a small Manitoba town. In the early 1880s, the young settlement of Emerson suddenly mushroomed into a city when an influx of immigrants arrived harbouring dreams of making Emerson a railway capital of Western Canada. But the risky venture failed, and the population of the city dwindled to that of a small rural town. The leading members of the community who had invested heavily in the drama were left broken. Emerson took several decades to recover from the blow.

When the old Town Hall building burned down in 1917, Emerson was at the time well on the road to recovery. The Mayor and Council formed a strong lobbying group who were able to work well, if not somewhat too independently at moments, with the new Liberal Provincial Government. This co-operation, both financially and architecturally, produced one of the finest administrative buildings in Manitoba.

John D. Atchison was appointed architect for the border town's new multi-purpose building which combined Court House, Town Hall, Registry Office, and an Auditorium. Arguably Manitoba's best architect of the period, Atchison excelled in the complimentary study of building structure and architectural style. Although the Emerson building was one of his simpler works, he nevertheless threw his full academic weight into its design. Standing on its high pedestal basement, the three storey brick structure displays the elegant and rather grand trappings of the Neo-Classical style. The entrance portico with its tall wooden Ionic columns, the pediment on front and side, and the cornice which wraps around near the top of the whole building, were all treated with Atchison's strong sense of classical detailing.

Emerson's most prestigious building incorporates the last court house built during Manitoba's first great wave of immigration which had begun around the time of Emerson's boom and closed in the years just after the First World War. As such, the structure is not only a symbol of the Province's established prosperity, but also a reminder of the town's regained self-confidence following a long period of financial difficulties. And just as significant is the Emerson Court House and Town Hall's architectural importance as one of Manitoba's more refined buildings by one of Manitoba's leading architects.

The Birth of Emerson

Emerson was the archetypal boom town; a community which rose on the high expectations of becoming one of Western Canada's principal cities, but which instead slipped into the genial role of a rural town. In his classic study, *Manitoba: A History* (1957), W.L. Morton described Emerson's earliest years as "fantastically daring". Unfortunately for the town founders, this daring did not pay off. In the early 1870s, two American businessmen were tipped off by their friend James J. Hill, the great railroad entrepreneur, about an area in Manitoba which possessed an extraordin-

ary potential for developing into the principal economic centre for the region. With eager optimism, Thomas Carney and William Fairbanks led a colonization party in the spring of 1874 to settle the prairie on the east side of the Red River at the Canadian-U.S. border. The fledgling community lived in the hope that their village would become the thriving junction for not only the north to south railway line, but the intended east to west cross-Canada route, the arterial channel to the new Canadian West. Expressing high, almost poetical aspirations for the settlement, Fairbanks named the town after a philosophical champion of man's individual nature, the American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson.

In 1878 the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) opened their anticipated Pembina branch from Winnipeg to Emerson, thus linking up with the American line of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. The tracks, running close by the Red River on its eastern side, put Emerson on a chief transportation and emigration route between the Mid-Western States and Winnipeg; at the time still one of the principal routes for Manitobans travelling to and from Eastern Canada. Emerson, proudly calling itself "The Gateway of Manitoba", now held a key position as settlers, mainly from Ontario, began to flow in. The town quickly became the major trading centre for the hinterland stretching 200 miles westward.

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Emerson and the Railways of Manitoba, 1881

But the first townspeople knew that to capitalize on the sudden influx of settlers, they had to establish Emerson as a railway capital for stock and supplies rolling west. Incorporated as a town in 1880, with Thomas Carney as mayor, the Emerson Council petitioned the Federal Government for the

right to build a new line called the Emerson and Turtle Mountain Railway. The CPR, however, desiring no competition, persuaded Ottawa to turn down the Emerson charter. Not discouraged, Mayor Carney went to the Manitoba Provincial Government and, in May 1881, successfully obtained the right to construct the Emerson and North Western Railway. The intention was to run this line from a terminus on the west bank of the Red River opposite the town — near the newly created, rival settlement of West Lynne, a Hudson's Bay Company venture — out to the fertile hills along the Manitoba Escarpment to the northwest, and then beyond to the Saskatchewan border.

The Emerson boom was on. Property prices in town soared as new citizens arrived with the euphoria of being in at the creation of one of Canada's greatest cities. It even was believed that Winnipeg, then too in the throes of its real estate boom, would be unable to maintain its lead in the race for provincial supremacy. Emerson's rising status as a commercial and railway centre was gaining. The population swelled to about 2,500 in 1882. Amongst the new arrivals were bankers, tailors, milliners, jewellers, solicitors, physicians, a dentist, a veterinarian surgeon, a wagon maker, many real estate agents, and even a soda water manufacturer. Emerson seemed well and truly established.

Then suddenly the bubble burst. In the autumn of 1882 the CPR cajoled the Federal Government into suppressing the railway legislation enacted by the provincial legislatures. A national policy of disallowance was being enforced strictly in order to maintain the CPR's monopoly. The Emerson and North Western Railroad was stillborn. The town of Emerson was left all but stranded. Mayor Carney rushed off to Ottawa to negotiate a compromise. He managed to come away with a life-saving settlement: a grant to help build a spur line off from the southwestern Manitoba branch of the CPR. There were, however, two stipulations. Emerson had to construct a bridge across the Red River, and it had to be in place by the time the CPR tracks reached the town the following year.

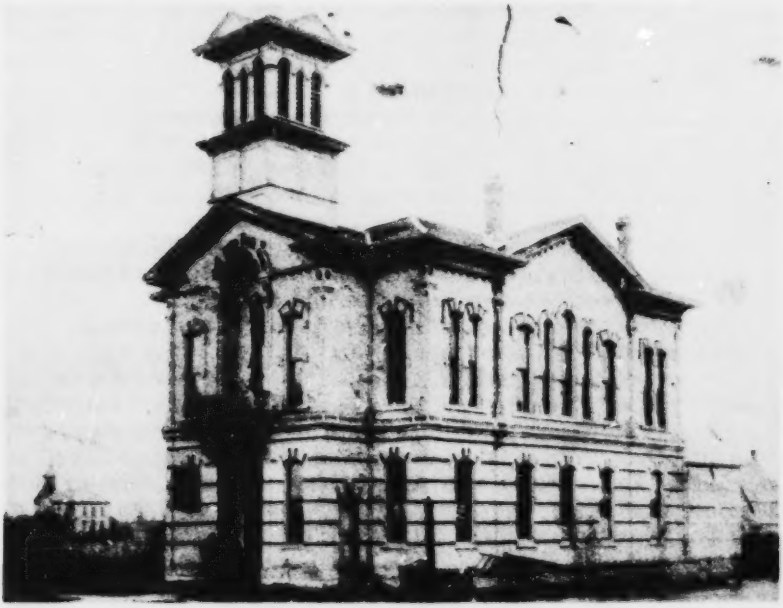
The town of West Lynne amalgamated with its old east bank rival to become the City of Emerson on 7 July 1883. Co-operation was essential if the townspeople were to get the bridge built by the deadline; an expensive operation. Sadly, a struggle for power broke out between the leaders of the community. And although the bridge was near completion when the CPR tracklayers arrived in the autumn, the city authorities were still bickering over the payments due to the contractor. In the eyes of the CPR officials, Emerson had defaulted. The lifeline which would have fed Emerson's prosperity was ripped out.

The days of prosperity were over. There were to be no financial returns on the heavy expenditures sunk into the town's future. And to make matters worse, feelings of bitterness still ran high in local politics. Debt and squabbling forced the Provincial Government to step in with a loan to bail out the failing border town. But the situation had gotten so desperate that Emerson could not meet payments. The council declared bankruptcy and went into receivership. This sorry state of affairs carried on until the turn-of-the-century. By then the city and its population had shrivelled. In 1900 the

number of citizens had dropped to 840; a population figure which has remained fairly constant ever since But at least by then the town was pulling out of the slump, establishing itself as a small yet important regional centre.

Emerson's First Town Hall

During the heady days of 1881, when untold prosperity seemed to be only around the corner, Emerson commissioned its first Town Hall Building. The optimism of the bourgeoning settlement was reflected in the size and splendour of its principal municipal building; a structure that was to house not only the town office, but the Land Registry as well as space for judicial business. For a time, the Emerson building was to leave Winnipeg's older barn-like hall in the shade. The Emerson Town Council, for the plans and designs of their new home, turned to the Winnipeg firm of Barber, Bowes & Barber; the architects who, in 1883, were to raise Winnipeg's second City Hall — that most wonderfully eclectic of all of Canada's civic buildings.



Manitoba Archives

Emerson Town Hall, 1881. Barber, Bowes & Barber, Architects.

When finished, Emerson's new Italianate-style building was the image of Victorian urban sophistication. Although consisting of only two stories, the architects nevertheless stretched the brick-veneered structure to its limit: the rooms were high; the windows narrow and elongated; and, within the front façade, the tall doorway was surmounted by an inset arch that broke through into the gable pediment. In turn, a large wooden tower perched

overhead. All these elements combined to create a Town Hall that projected an aura of civic stability; a deceptive aura as was to be proved by the town's collapse soon after the building's completion.

The Present Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building

Fire destroyed the Town Hall in the early morning of 16 June 1917. Also consumed in the flames were the supplies used by the Home Economics Society, the musical instruments belonging to the Town Band, much stage scenery and the piano. The Council no longer had offices or a meeting room, the County Court Judge had lost his circuit seat, and the Primary School children did not have a schoolroom. Fortunately, the basement vault survived the disaster, preserving the deeds and papers of the Land Registry Office whose compartments lay in ruins around it.

At the time of the fire, the mayor of Emerson was Ezra Casselman. Elected in 1915, Casselman proved to be a popular and strong community leader, maintaining office for a dozen years. By profession he was a druggist. After graduating from the first class of the Ontario School of Pharmacy he had immediately made his way out West to Emerson in 1882. In that quarter of a century since his arrival, he had watched the town rise, decline and finally settle into a respectable and steady existence.

Mayor Ezra Casselman

With the old building's ashes still smouldering, Casselman called an emergency meeting of the Town Council. The decision was to rebuild as quickly as possible. A delegation was formed, with the Mayor in charge, to approach the Provincial Government towards the possibility of contributing to the cost of a new building. Now Casselman, with the aid of the local MLA for the area, J.D. Baskerville, was able to attract the attention of the Minister for Public Works. Also in Casselman's favour was the fact that the new Liberal Government was riding on the crest of its legislation of clean-up and reform which had followed on the heals of the scandal concerning the construction of the Manitoba Legislative Building; an event which gave Premier T.C. Norris's party an overwhelming majority in the House. The Department of Public Works, which had been at the heart of the scandal, had been reorganized and was out to improve its tarnished image. The recent government policy was to partly fund new buildings that contained certain government functions. The Province's contribution of half the building's cost in order to cover the quartering of the County Court and Land Registry was a generous one. On 22 June 1917, the *Emerson Journal* was proud to announce that the Provincial Government was to assist in erecting a Town Hall which "won't likely be a log shack . . . but a substantial building that will be an ornament to our town — as it should be."

Less than a week after the fire, Stephen C. Oxton, the Deputy Minister of Public Works, arrived in Emerson to survey the damage and discuss the new building. The Council gladly accepted his offer to have the well-known Winnipeg architect, J.D. Atchison, prepare preliminary sketches. Unknown to Oxton, however, Mayor Casselman had telephoned another Winnipeg architect, Henry W. Greene, several days earlier and had encouraged him to begin on similar drawings. What followed was a failure to establish who was the patron of the project: the Provincial Government or the Town Council. The architects became the pawns caught in the middle of this misunderstanding.

Of the designs drawn up by the two architects, Casselman preferred Atchison's work. But, as he himself said, he had "a Council of six men to handle", and each held tenaciously to his own viewpoint. So varied were the Councillors' opinions that they placed an advertisement in the *Winnipeg Free Press* announcing that the preparation of designs for the new Emerson Court House and Town Hall was open to competition. The building cost, read the notice, was not to exceed $30,000, including architect's fees. Again, the Council had acted on their own volition, without consulting the Department of Public Works. And then ironically, but not surprisingly considering that competitors only had ten days to submit, only two architects entered — Atchison and Greene. The Council, against Casselman's better judgment, chose Greene.

Atchison, believing himself unfairly treated, petitioned the Government. Most professionally, the Minister of Public Works turned the whole matter over to the Manitoba Association of Architects (MAA). A panel of judges, lead by the MAA President, Lewis Jordan, all agreed that the designs by both architects were of equal merit. But they ruled that Atchison, in entering the competition, knew full well that he could be eliminated.

He had accepted the challenge, and lost. His claim for recoupment of costs was rejected.

Yet it was Atchison who was hired. The Department of Public Works had from the outset chosen Atchison and then had advertised for the contractor's tenders based on his calculations. Atchison's drawings were also in a more complete state than Greene's, and both the Province and the Town Council were anxious for work to begin immediately, before the winter season closed in. The Province thereupon threatened to withdraw their $15,000 grant if Greene could not have his plans and specifications prepared by 1 October 1917. Greene could not, and resigned from the project.

Although the incident of the double hiring of architects may appear contentious, in actual fact the whole affair was carried out amiably. In the end all parties came away satisfied: Greene received a justly compensatory sum for his services, the government was pleased that the architect of their initial choosing had the job, and the Emerson Council were delighted to receive a handsome building with Provincial financial assistance.

The ceremony of laying the cornerstone which took place on the cold afternoon of 18 October cemented the feelings of good will. First, Mayor Casselman read a brief history of the town of Emerson and its former Town Hall. This was then placed in a box which contained, amongst other

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Laying the cornerstone of the Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building, 18 October 1917

articles, three Winnipeg daily newspapers, a copy of the *Emerson Journal*, and a set of Canadian coins. The Minister of Public Works, the Honourable Thomas H. Johnson, then performed the placing of the cornerstone and was duly presented with the traditional silver trowel. Finally, Premier Norris gave a rousing speech, intently listened to by the teachers and pupils who had turned out to watch the event. Norris's address was a patriotic one, about the servicemen overseas; for it must not be forgotten that Emerson's Town Hall was raised during the final years of the First World War when many local men were suffering bitterly on the Western Front.

The Architect

During the first decades of this century, John D. Atchison (1870-c1935) was one of Manitoba's foremost architects. His architectural expertise principally lay within two disciplines: luxury apartment blocks and steel-framed office buildings. He was also a stylistic master. His scholarly designs reflected his early architectural training. Born in Illinois, Atchison had been raised and educated in Chicago; a city which, following the disasterous Great Fire of 1871, had grown within a generation to become

Newspaper Cartoonists' Association of Manitoba, *Manitobans as We See Em* (1909)

John D. Atchison, Architect. Cartoon by Hay Steed, 1909

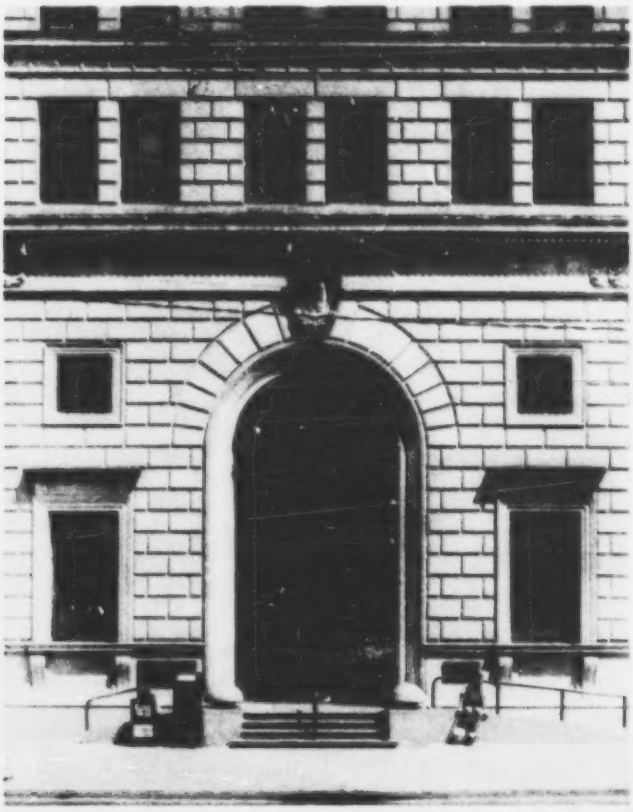
an architectural Mecca — progressive, ambitious and innovational — having a profound influence on contemporary building design and construction. As a student of architecture in Chicago, Atchison found himself swept into the company of many of the country's greatest structural designers of the day. William Le Baron Jenney, steel-frame expert and architect of Chicago's first skyscraper, was one such leading member of the "Chicago School". Atchison was to train and work in Jenney's office, leaving only to join the staff of the department co-ordinating the Columbian Exposition of 1893; a world's fair held in Chicago which established a Neo-Classical aesthetic that gripped North American architecture for several generations to come. After the Exposition, Atchison returned to work for Jenney until, in 1895, he established his own practice. Many of his first commissions were for the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad Company.

Manitoba Archives

The 13-storey Union Trust Building, Winnipeg, 1911-12. John D. Atchison, Architect. The colonnaded building adjoining is the Bank of Commerce, 1910-12. Darling & Pearson, Architects

Thus when Atchison opened his office in Winnipeg in 1905 — moving permanently to the city with his wife Miss Abeel the following year — he was a respected architect of great maturity, intelligence and experience. In his first year alone, he designed no less than five large apartment buildings, including the Alexandra Block at Graham and Edmonton (demolished 1979), Balmoral Court at Balmoral and Sargent, and the Wardlaw Apartments at Wardlaw and Nassau. This hectic pace never subsided. Over the years J.D. Atchison and Company raised many of Winnipeg's most substantial apartment houses in response to the population explosion that shot Winnipeg to the third largest metropolis in Canada.

In Chicago, Atchison had worked on the plans for some of America's first skyscrapers. His invaluable first-hand knowledge of the structural use of iron and steel made him a pioneer designer of several of Western



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Entrance, the Bank of Hamilton Building, Winnipeg, built 1916-18. John D. Atchison, Architect

Canada's first office towers. Added to this was an ability to create sensitive and handsome façades. Clustered in the financial district near Portage and Main, Atchison raised three of Winnipeg's finest buildings. All were in the fashionable Neo-Classical styles of the period: the marble-interiored Great-West Life Building (1909) at 177 Lombard; the 13-storey Union Trust Building (1911-12) at the corner of Lombard and Main, covered in gleaming terracotta and topped by great Venetian windows; and the palazzo image of the Bank of Hamilton Building (1916-18) at McDermot and Main. The Winnipeg General Hospital (1911), the elegant Boyd Building on Portage Avenue (1911-12) and the column-bedecked Board of Trade Building (1912, demolished 1934) were also structures by Atchison which added greatly to Winnipeg's growing architectural prestige.

John Atchison was not exclusively a Manitoba architect. He designed several buildings for the city of Moose Jaw, including their City Hall, Saskatchewan College, the Collegiate Institute and the Hammond Building. In addition, when he retired to Pasedena, California in 1923, he continued to practice, comfortably adopting the indigenous Spanish Colonial style for his residential work. Versatile, current, spirited — Atchison's architectural performances helped to bring Manitoba architecture onto the modern stage.

The Architecture of the Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building

Construction on the Emerson Court House and Town Hall proceeded rapidly throughout the winter of 1917-18. The general contractors, Grey and Davidson of Winnipeg, had the roof in place by November so that internal work could be carried out before the freezing blasts of winter winds had set in. The building was completed by the summer; except for the grim installation of the three prison cells in the basement which followed in 1919.

The Honourable T.H. Johnson, S.C. Oxton, Mayor Casselman, and the Mayor of Morris were amongst the dignitaries who gathered to open the Emerson Court House and Town Hall on 29 July 1918. The *Emerson Journal* pronounced the building "a crackerjack and a credit to the town and community." Total cost for the structure, including the fine wood furnishings supplied by the government, came to just over $38,000; a substantial amount for a building serving a small community.

As befitted a multi-purpose building that housed the dignified presence of justice, government, property, and public forum — Court House, Town Hall, Land Titles Office, and Auditorium — J.D. Atchison created an edifice of an authorative and prestigious appearance. Stylistically, the Emerson building is very much a secular temple. The architect chose a straightforward Neo-Classical approach. Raised high on a cement foundation, and set upon a limestone plinth, the bearing brick walls are treated simply. The entrance façade, however, is grandly fashioned. Tall wooden columns of the Ionic order, standing on contrasting bases, reach the full two storey height of the building. When these pillars were installed in position in February 1918, the local paper was greatly impressed, remarking that they gave the building the look of a Hall of Fame: "a splendid

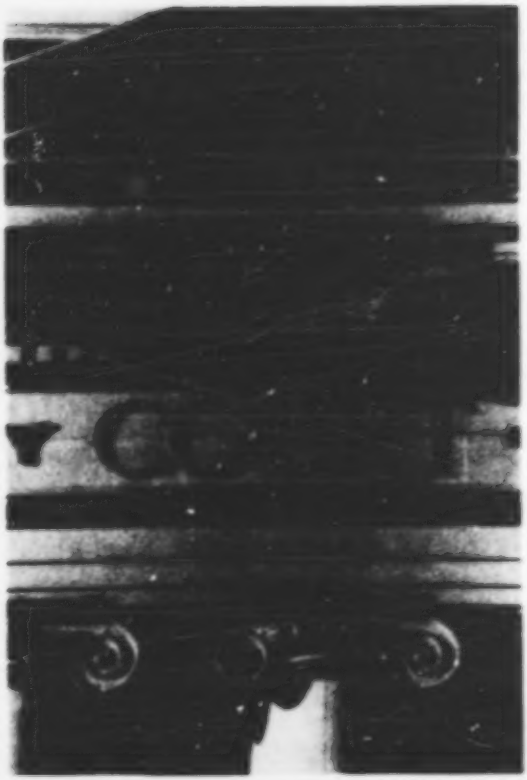
example of 'Camouflage'," read the report, relishing a chance to use the latest military term.

In raised letters upon the entrance frieze are emblazoned the words "COURT HOUSE & TOWN HALL". Above, the whole is crowned by a pediment containing a decorative carving of a wreath and garland. Between the pillars lies a lofty rounded arch — one of Atchison's favourite entrance motifs — set off with a limestone keystone. This portal arch acts as an impressive frame for the entrance doors, which in turn are flanked and topped by decorative wooden pilasters and a pediment. A large multi-light window illuminates the interior staircase behind. The wide cornice that sweeps around the whole building breaks out on the east wall facing Winnipeg Street to form another pedimented surface, this time supported by a row of four brick pilasters.

Manitoba Archives

North front façade of the newly completed Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building, 1918

Atchison handled his classical language of architecture with care and precision, dwelling lovingly on details and proportion: the columns are given a tapering entasis to impart a sense of grace; the frieze and pediment are worked out in elegant, traditional forms. With a meticulous eye upon the tinniest element, Atchison brought his scholarly standards to bear on the Emerson Town Hall. He would have none of that cheese-paring simplicity often to be seen in contemporary buildings. The lessons he had learnt in Chicago, and especially at the most exuberant of Neo-Classical events, the Columbian Exhibition, were put into practice in this small Manitoba town. It is this academic quality of beauty which transforms the structure from a mere building into a fine work of architecture.



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Detail of the Ionic capitals, entablature and pediment of the north front

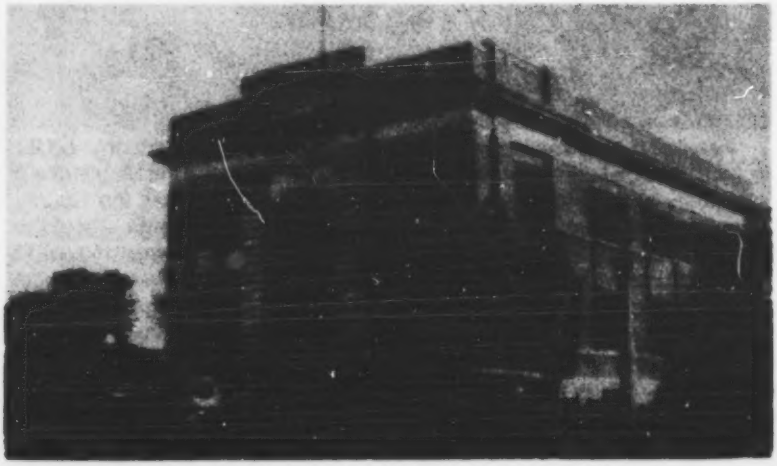
Internally, Atchison conveniently arranged the plan to accommodate the hive of official and social activities. In the basement are the Magistrate's Rooms, as well as the lock-up cages. The first floor houses the County Court Room — today used primarily for Town Council meetings — and the Office of the Town Clerk. And until 1941, when their records were moved to Winnipeg, the Land Registry Office occupied several rooms on the west side of the building. The large vault room still remains. At the rear of the main floor is the Town Library. Originally this was the Ladies' Room: a comfortably furnished apartment used as a centre for local women's gatherings.

The whole of the top floor is given over to the Assembly Hall. At the south end there is a stage, with small changing rooms on either side; and at the north end of the room there is a balcony. Over the years the auditorium has hosted concerts, plays, operettas, dances, political meetings, thanksgiving services and even spelling bees. The imperial-looking chair, usually

placed at the front, formerly belonged to the Grand Master of the old Orange Lodge. It now serves as the judge's seat when the County Court holds its regular sessions in the hall. Some of the original wooden chairs remain, but now audiences generally sit on the 1920s row seats; fun Art Deco furniture with their colourful metal aisle plates decked out in a zig-zag pattern.

Significance

Historical, social and architectural associations mark the Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building as an important Manitoba building. That such a striking and exceptionally fine civic structure was built in a moderately small town — and built during the war years — reflected a community assured of itself and its future. The instability and uncertainties of Emerson's first years during the early 1880s had been replaced by the optimism of the surrounding rural and agricultural prosperity. When the old Town Hall burned down in 1917, the town was fortunate in possessing such a determined Town Council. By turning to the Provincial Government for financial support, Mayor Casselman's delegation was just in time to take advantage of the reforming policies of the Norris Government. The Emerson building was one of the first structures erected in the new era of participation between the Provincial Government and private architects that followed the dissolution of the Provincial Architect's Office in 1916. This fresh approach to government-sponsored architecture also spawned such notable works as the Dauphin Court House (1916-17) by J.H. Bossons, and The Pas Community Building (1916-17) by George Nelson Taylor.



Manitoba Archives

Carman Memorial Hall. Built 1919-20

John D. Atchison was a leading architect in Canada; and the Emerson Court House and Town Hall was one of his finest gems. Visually, Atchison designed a prepossessing and distinctive building. The imposing front façade captures the richness of opposing scale: the immensity of the columns, cornice, and pediment in contrast to the fine detailing of the wooden mouldings and brick patterns. The internal plan too shows Atchison to be an organized designer, arranging no less than four service functions — Court House, Town Hall, Land Titles Office, Auditorium — comfortably under one roof. Architecturally then, it is not surprising to find the Emerson building influencing similar structures at about the same date. The Carman Memorial Hall of 1919-20, probably designed by William Fingland, greatly imitates Atchison's building in shape and appearance; without the columns but including that distinctive high-arched entrance portal.

Since its inception, the Court House and Town Hall Building has given a focus to community life in and around Emerson. Besides the innumerable important decisions handed down in the court and council meetings over the years, two poignant events from the Hall's earliest days illustrate the building's importance in the town's history. In June 1920, the women of the district turned out in the Assembly Hall to greet Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the English suffragette, and demonstrate their appreciation to her for helping them win the right to vote. And later in the same year, on Thanksgiving Day, the town welcomed the Reverend Charles Gordon — better known to his readers as the adventure writer Ralph Connor — when he came to unveil the Soldier's Monument on the Town Hall grounds. This memorial statue, for which the public subscription money had been raised by the indefatigable efforts of Mayor Casselman, was executed under the aegis of the Samuel Hooper Marble Company of Winnipeg. In an attitude of contemplation, leaning on his rifle and with one hand under his chin, the figure of the soldier stands in quiet repose; a fitting companion alongside one of Manitoba's exceedingly dignified pieces of architecture.

Bibliography for Further Reading

W.L. Morton's *Manitoba: A History* (1957) is the finest study touching upon Emerson's spectacular rise and decline in association with Manitoba's own land boom. The history of the town's fortunes, as linked to the railway, finds a prominent place in Pierre Berton's *The National Dream: The Great Railway 1871-1881* (1970).

The principal local histories for the town are *History of Emerson* (1950) by William Carlson and Mrs. Masterson, and the well-documented *Emerson 1875-1975: A Centennial History* (1975) by James McClelland and Dan Lewis. The authentic flavour of Emerson's earliest days can be captured by leafing through the *International* (1878-89), the *Southern Manitoba Times* (1883-93), and the *Emerson Journal* (1895-1966). A complete run of these publications may be consulted in the Manitoba Legislative Library.

For an extensive examination of Canadian court houses, the very thorough work by the Canadian Inventory of Historic Building, *The Cana-*

dian Court House Before 1930 (3 volumes, 1977-79) should be read in conjunction with R.R. Rostecki's *The Early Court Houses of Manitoba* (MS. Report No. 285, 1977), which also formed part of the Parks Canada survey. These studies have been compiled by Margaret Carter in *Early Canadian Court Houses* (Environment Canada, 1983).

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The Soldier's Monument on the grounds of the Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building

Emerson Court House and Town Hall

This splendid example of a small Neo-Classical style municipal building was designed by the Winnipeg architect John D. Atchison. Erected during 1917-18 by general contractors Grey and Davidson, it remains one of the outstanding buildings in Emerson. This was the last court house built during the great settlement boom of 1880 to 1920.

The many roles which this structure has played — court house, town hall and offices, registry office, gaol, assembly hall — have ensured an economically used building for a small, important regional centre. The building was officially opened on 29 July 1918. The *Emerson Journal* considered the new edifice, with its Ionic columns, to be a "crackerjack and a credit to the town and community."

The Historic Sites Advisory Board of Manitoba